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For Immediate Release
April 7, 2005

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Sen. Toy announces opportunity for Michigan residents to help promote organ donation

LANSING – Michigan residents can now contribute to organ donor awareness when they renew their drivers' licenses or state identification cards, Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia, announced today at a press conference in Livonia.

"Organ donation is the ultimate gift of life," Toy said. "While not everyone is able to donate their organs, anyone can help build awareness so that all eligible donors know what a tremendous opportunity they have to help another person in such a meaningful way."

Just 7 percent of Michigan residents are registered on the state's organ donor list. The national average for such lists is 40 percent. As of December 1, there were more than 2800 people waiting for donor organs in Michigan.

"After looking into the eyes and listening to the voices of the grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and children of loved ones desperately in need of organ and tissue donations, I knew something must be done to improve the quality of life for the residents of this great state."

Toy sponsored the legislation to create the "Organ and Tissue Donation Education Fund" and provide individuals the opportunity to make a financial contribution to the fund when applying for or renewing driver's licenses or state ID cards. Money in the new fund will be used to encourage Michigan residents to place their names on the organ donor registry.

"Dialysis, other life sustaining procedures, and long-term care take a considerable emotional and financial toll on the patients and families involved, and are much more costly to our state health budget than organ and tissue transplants," Toy said. "These concerns reinforce the need to educate Michigan residents on the importance of organ donations."

The new law received support from AARP, Gift of Life of Michigan, the Henry Ford Transplant Institute, University of Michigan Health System, Donate Life Coalition of Michigan and the Detroit Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program.

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